

- Submits grades late
- Writes inaccurate or unclear reports
- Does not update grade book or it is inaccurate

Subject Specific Qualities

Most teachers have been in an unfamiliar situation where they were not certain of what would be considered normal versus questionable. For example, while a chemical fume hood would look out of place in a history classroom, it is a common element in a chemistry classroom. The following subject specific qualities and red flags are shared to equip the reader with some indicators of what may be observed in effective and ineffective teachers' rooms.

English and Language Arts

An effective English teacher has a classroom that is text-rich and integrates the elements of the English language through writing, reading, and oral expression, including listening. The teacher is well read in the subject area and works diligently to convey enthusiasm for the subject. The teacher encourages the reading of great works of literature for class projects and for pleasure, maintains writing portfolios, provides opportunities for discussion, and gives plenty of feedback. In today's changing technological classrooms, software programs may be used to help enhance reading and writing instruction as well as research skills. The effective teacher's classroom integrates all key components of the English curriculum.

To enhance oral language in students, the teacher may

- Provide instruction in listening
- Model good listening behaviors
- Give instruction in speaking skills and verbal and nonverbal messages
- Provide activities for the preparation, practice, and presentation of formal speeches
- Demonstrate and practice the adaptation of oral communication strategies to match the needs of the situation and setting
- Offer opportunities to participate in role-plays, interviews, and impromptu speeches
- Lead discussion groups
- Give instruction in dialect, pronunciation, and articulation

- Use vocal elements in oral presentations: pitch, volume, rate, quality, animation, and pause
- Give instruction on how to use media for research, analysis, and evaluation of media messages

The teacher uses strategies in reading instruction, including

- Read-alouds
- Independent reading
- Dyad reading (paired reading)
- Library visits to promote use of the media center and facilitate book choice
- Classroom libraries
- Providing blocks of time for students to read
- Cause-and-effect frame
- Sequence of events
- Compare and contrast matrix
- Proposition and support outline
- Debriefing
- Discussion web
- Word wall
- Think-pair-share
- Literature circles
- Reader's workshop

Writing instruction may include these types of activities

- POWER writing (prewriting, organizing, writing, editing, rewriting)
- Peer-reviews and constructive criticism
- In-class writing and publishing
- Writer's workshop
- Journals
- Use of technology to facilitate the writing process
- Writing in different forms (technical, persuasive, research, expository, narrative, and poetry)
- Grammar instruction
- Outlining
- Note-taking (e.g., Cornell notes)

History and Social Studies

The effective teacher empowers students to think about history and the implications of past choices, in order to guide thinking about the future or to find patterns within history. Students are taught a blend of essential facts and skills that enable them to access knowledge and make interpretations of history. The effective history or social studies teacher usually has an area of historical expertise that is evident in discussions and interactions with students on that period in history. Teachers use their own understanding of how history works to teach students to construct their own personal bank of tools to critically examine current news and past events. The effective teacher finds ways to make the events of old become relevant to the students of today.

The teacher uses a variety of preteaching strategies including

- K-W-L charts (Know, Want to Know, Learned)
- Learning logs
- Timelines
- Anticipation guides
- Graphic organizers

The teacher uses a variety of classroom practices, such as

- Simulations
- Debates
- Independent research projects
- Socratic seminar
- Internet and technology based activities
- Historical archives and primary document analysis
- Current events
- Mapping (globes, wall maps, flat maps, computer maps, and sketched maps)

The teacher may use a variety of assessment strategies

- Cloze read activities
- Multimedia presentations
- Reaction papers
- Historical interpretation
- Rubrics
- Teacher-made tests, both objective and essay

Mathematics

An effective mathematics teacher has the ability to facilitate students' ability to understand, analyze, and solve problems. The teacher presents real-world applications of the math concepts to make the application real for the students. The teacher facilitates students thinking beyond the paper and the pencil to how mathematics is evident and applied to everyday life. The room probably is filled with manipulatives and decorated with math-related posters and 3-D constructions. The chalkboard tray holds oversized tools of the ones students use, such as protractors and compasses. The teacher uses the tools to break down the process and provide meaning for the class. If a student is having difficulty, the teacher is able to diagnose and remediate the gap in prior knowledge or identify where the student has misunderstood the process and gets the child back on track. Students are asked to compute problems, write about solutions, and discuss mathematics. Mathematics is not just numbers and symbols; it is a language for understanding.

The mathematics teacher uses a variety of tools and manipulatives to teach, including

- Various papers (grid, dot, patty, and notebook)
- Calculators (4-function, scientific, and graphing)
- Measurement tools (angle ruler, balance, compass, protractor, ruler, and thermometer)
- Mathematical software programs and spreadsheets
- Commercial manipulatives (algebra tiles, cubes, Cuisenaire rods, decimal blocks, fraction circles, Geo boards, Hands-on Algebra, and tangrams)
- Common materials (spinners, coins, dice, and yarn)
- Chalkboards or white boards that have grids
- Overhead calculator and transparent tiles

The effective mathematics teacher uses a variety of approaches to teaching the content, including

- Application problems using real-life data
- 3-D constructions
- Reading and writing story problems
- Using visuals in problems

- Mental mathematics
- Estimation
- Discussing mathematical concepts
- Talking through how to do the problem by students
- Tessellations
- Examining musical patterns in algebra
- Considering angles and proportions in art when studying measurement
- Venn diagrams

Science

Scientific discoveries are constantly adding to and changing the body of science knowledge. Effective teachers engage students in experimentation and discussion of the findings. They are aware of changes and highlight new and older discoveries with students as, together, they investigate and develop an understanding of science.

The science classroom has safety as a focus with the following items displayed or easily available

- Posted safety rules
- Available protective materials (lab aprons and goggles)
- Fire extinguisher or fire blanket in rooms using flammable materials
- Classroom shut-off valves, if present, are labeled
- Chemicals are stored with MSDS sheets (materials safety data sheets)
- Marked disposal bin for broken glass

The science teacher uses a variety of techniques to facilitate the learning of the curriculum objectives

- Cooperative learning groups
- Computer simulations
- Laboratory investigations and experiments
- Lab write-ups
- Hands-on activities
- Demonstrations
- Reading scientific articles and journals

The science classroom contains a variety of equipment, including

- Beakers
- Graduated cylinders
- Flasks
- Rulers, compasses, and protractors
- Balances
- CBL (computer-based laboratory) probes
- Graphing calculators and scientific calculators
- Plant grow light
- Dissection tools

A teacher is not simply effective because of the presence of qualities. Likewise, red flags do not necessarily signal an ineffective teacher, just a behavior that needs improvement. Just as teachers must differentiate for student needs, additional qualities and red flags may be applicable to your unique situation. Teachers are effective because of how various personal and professional factors combine and are executed in a classroom.